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NASHVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO 16 YEARS **FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OFFENSES INVOLVING COMMERCIAL WEB SITES**

WASHINGTON – Timothy Ryan Richards, 27, of Nashville, Tenn., was sentenced to 16 years in prison after being convicted of 11 child pornography-related offenses centered around his operation of commercial child pornography Web sites, Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Edward M. Yarbrough of the Middle District of Tennessee announced today.

In October 2006, after hearing two-and-a-half weeks of evidence, a federal jury in Nashville found Richards guilty of producing, distributing, conspiring to distribute, advertising and possessing child pornography, as well as violating the record-keeping requirements associated with the distribution of sexually explicit material. Evidence at trial showed the investigation of Richards began in September 2005, when federal search warrants were issued for the content of computer servers in Fremont, Calif., and Los Angeles. The servers contained child pornography Web sites.

Trial testimony proved Richards ran several commercial Web sites depicting adolescent boys engaged in sexually explicit activity, until his arrest on Sept. 22, 2005. The defendant created three of the Web sites he ran and took over another, the "Justinsfriends" Web site, in the summer of 2005. Customers paid fees to access the child pornography available on the Web sites operated by Richards. In addition to providing material for the various Web sites, evidence showed Richards engaged in a sexual relationship with one of the victims, who was 14 years old at the time. Evidence at trial showed that Richards filmed and took pictures of himself engaged in sexually explicit conduct with the minor numerous times over a four-year period. Richards also traveled with the minor to foreign countries, including Australia and Iceland, where he again filmed and photographed sexually explicit activity with the minor. Finally, evidence showed that as part of his Internet distribution scheme, Richards advertised child pornography on his and other sites and set up elaborate affiliate marketing programs in which he rewarded others for generating new customers for his Web sites.

Evidence presented at the sentencing hearing revealed that when Richards was arrested, he was living in Nashville with a 13 year old boy, with whom he had sexual contact. Evidence also showed that during this relationship, Richards had married the minor's mother.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney S. Carran Daughtrey of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Tennessee as well as Trial Attorney Elizabeth Yusi and former Trial Attorney Kayla Bakshi of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS). The case was investigated by the FBI with support from the FBI's Innocent Images Unit and the Computer and Analysis Recovery Team, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the CEOS High Tech Forensic Investigative Unit and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

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